

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY/AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
MONTGOMERY SCHOOLS OF NURSING**

**GRADUATE STUDENT  
HANDBOOK**

**Academic Year 2011-2012**

## Welcome

The faculty and staff welcome you to the AU & AUM Joint MSN Program. We realize that this is an enormous decision in your professional and personal development.

This handbook is designed to give you some basic information and resources as you progress in the program. Like any document not all questions may be answered. If you do not find an answer to your questions please contact your faculty advisor, the director of the MSN program, or the Dean's office.

We hope you find your experience as a graduate nursing student productive and rewarding! It will require dedication and time management but you will find that it is an important step in realizing your goals.

Sincerely,

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Dean and Professor  
AU & AUM Schools of Nursing

Anita C. All, PhD, RN  
Professor and Director AU & AUM Joint MSN Program  
Wachovia Endowed Professor

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The information in this handbook addresses some of the most common concerns of graduate students. The SONs reserves the right to update the handbook as needed. Students will be notified in a timely manner of any changes to the handbook. Students are responsible for information in the handbook and for policies of the Auburn University and Auburn Montgomery Graduate Colleges contained in the bulletins and the websites. These policies are frequently updated and the student is responsible for checking the appropriate websites frequently for changes that impact their success and graduation.

Faculty in the AU/AUM Joint MSN Program believe that no one person or entity is solely responsible for high-quality graduate education, but that high quality graduate education is a partnership between faculty, students, and administrators.

Students in the joint MSN program will be prepared to provide health services to diverse populations in multiple settings in a dynamic health care environment. Therefore, students focus on developing advanced knowledge and skills in a variety of roles.

## **AU/AUM SCHOOLS OF NURSING MISSION**

The mission of the School of Nursing is to foster and exemplify excellence in teaching, service/outreach, and research. The program prepares professional nurses to provide patient – centered, culturally competent, evidence based care for diverse populations in a dynamic health care environment. Baccalaureate graduates are ready to assume leadership roles in the provision of nursing care in all health care settings. Master’s graduates are ready to lead in educator and advanced practice nurse roles in health related services to diverse populations.

## **AU/AUM MSN PROGRAM**

### **Curricular Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate strategies that improve collaboration and communication among team members, patients, patients’ support networks and health care professionals to design, coordinate and evaluate the delivery of patient care (Essential III, VII, X-15)
2. Use information and communication technologies in advanced nursing practice to enhance patient education, expand accessibility of care, analyze practice patterns, and improve nurse sensitive outcomes. (Essential III, V, VII, X-6)
3. Apply advanced nursing concepts in the comprehensive and systematic assessment of health and illness in complex situations, care environments, and actual and potential risks in diverse populations (Essential I, III, VIII, X-1,2,3)
4. Integrate clinical judgment, evidence based findings and theory while implementing health care policies that improve access, equity, efficiency and social justice in the delivery of health care. (Essential I, IV, VI, VIII, X-4,5, 18)

5. Design strategies that promote lifelong learning of self and mentoring of peers that include the incorporation of professional nursing standards, relevant statutes and regulations and accountability into practice. (Essential IV, IX, X-7, 16)
6. Adapt advanced practice knowledge of illness, disease management, clinical prevention and population health concepts to care delivery in response to global factors, e.g. international law, public policy, geopolitics, and geo-economics. (Essential VI, VIII, X-9, 13, 17)
7. Provide ethical, culturally sensitive, patient centered care based on epidemiological, social and environmental data to improve health status of patient populations in an advanced nursing role independently and collaboratively with professionals from multiple disciplines. (Essential VII, VIII, IX, X-8,12)
8. Apply leadership knowledge and skills in economics of care, managing micro-, meso-, and macro- systems of care and evaluating continuous quality improvement processes. (Essential II, III, X-7,14)
9. Incorporate core scientific and ethical principles in assisting patients and other health care providers in identifying and addressing potential and actual ethical issues arising from the use of technologies in patient care. (Essential IV, V, IX, X-10)
10. Design innovative educational programs for patients, families and interprofessional health care teams using teaching and learning principles. (Essential V, IX, X-5,6)

### **Admission Criteria for the AU/AUM Joint MSN Program**

Potential students must meet all the criteria listed in the current Auburn University Graduate School bulletin ([http://www.auburn.edu/student\\_info/bulletin/graduate.pdf](http://www.auburn.edu/student_info/bulletin/graduate.pdf)). Students may be admitted under two classifications. These are approved and provisional. Approved admissions meet all the criteria listed for the Graduate School and any additional criteria of the department, school or college. Provisional admissions have one semester to complete the requirements for approved admission. Those conditions may vary from student to student (e.g. receipt of GRE scores by the end of the next semester). Students with provisional admission may not register for the next semester without completing any requirements or by approval of the MSN Program Director. This would only happen under exceptional circumstances.

Admission to the program is competitive and enrollment is limited. Only applications meeting the application deadlines will be considered for either category of admission.

#### **Admission Deadlines:**

Application must be done online at <http://www.grad.auburn.edu/propective.html>.

March 1 for summer admission

May 1 for fall admission

October 1 for spring admission

Full-time admission is available only in the summer semester. Part-time admission is available during every semester. Students entering the program part-time or changing to part-time will have limited if any opportunities to move to a full-time status.

**School of Nursing MSN Program Specific Criteria:**

- A Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from an accredited college or university
- Good academic standing from the last university attended
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (students with GPAs of lower than 3.0 may be considered for provisional admission if otherwise qualified)
- Unencumbered license as a registered nurse or waiver requested for those just finishing a BSN degree in the spring semester
- Submission of GRE scores
- Three Professional Recommendations. These need to address professional behaviors and professional competencies
- Current resume
- Essay -This essay should address rationale for seeking this degree and your rationale for your program specific option. Be sure to include the impact that you will make on nursing and healthcare. This should be a minimum of 750 words and no longer than 1000 words.

**School of Nursing Specific Admission Information:**

- Students who meet all criteria for approved admission (packet completed and meet above criteria) will be considered first for admission.
- Students who will be completing their BSN during the semester before admission may ask for a waiver of the unencumbered license as a registered nurse. This license must be obtained during the first 6 weeks of the first semester of study if the waiver is granted. Any student who does not successfully obtain an RN license at the end of 6 weeks will be administratively un-enrolled from any courses with clinical hours. They may continue in courses that do not require clinical and will be moved to part-time status. These students will be considered based on their GPA on their current transcript. The BSN must be completed before classes start.
- Students may be interviewed by the MSN admission committee and other faculty and/or community members during the times designated.

Students must complete the intent to enroll form and packet material within 15 days of email notification of admission or their spot may be given to another applicant. (Students summer 2011 will be asked to complete in 5 days)

Students may be required to provide a background check. All materials required by the Auburn University and the School of Nursing must be completed before the first day of



classes. All graduate students in the MSN program admitted beginning summer 2011 must receive a grade of at least a B in all courses and may only repeat a course one time.

### **Probationary/Provisional Admission**

Students may be admitted under probationary status in certain circumstances. Students admitted on probation to the graduate program will remain in probationary status until they have completed the necessary paper work or 8 hours of graduate credit with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. Students should notify the program director when they have met the provisional requirements.

### **International Students**

TOEFL - Written and oral communication is extremely important to academic success and clinical proficiency. The School of Nursing reserves the right to require evidence of written and oral proficiency. International students whose first language is not English or who has obtained a degree from outside of the United States must present a TOEFL score of 600, a score of a 250 on the computer-based test (CBT), or a score of 100 on the internet-based test (IBT).

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Academic Advisor/Graduate Committees**

Each student is assigned an academic advising committee with a major advisor when they are admitted to the MSN program by the graduate director. The role of the advisor is to direct the student in the development of her/his plan of study and to provide academic counseling when needed. All plans of student after developed must be submitted by the student on the Auburn GSPOST system. This system may be found on the Graduate School website. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to be sure the Plan of Study receives all necessary approvals and revisions before the graduation check is done prior to graduation.

### **Plan of Study**

All students in the MSN Program must file a Plan of Study with the Auburn University Graduate College. This plan of study should be developed in consultation with the student's academic advisor.

For full and part-time MSN students, the Plan of Study must be submitted no later than the end of the first semester in Graduate School. Notification of all changes must be provided before the beginning of the final semester. One to three changes may be made by using the simplified "Change in Existing Plan of Study Form" available at the Graduate School or on the web. Four or more changes require a new Plan of Study. The student is responsible for carrying out the planned program and for asking the academic advisor to assist in making necessary changes.

No student will be permitted to graduate who fails to submit a Plan of Study and a graduation check to the Graduate School prior to the semester of expected graduation. Graduation day is the official last day of each semester and, therefore, is the deadline for submitting Plans of Study and graduation checks for graduation the following semester.

Any conflicts between the academic advisor and the student should be presented to the MSN Program Director in writing for remediation.

### **Master's Degree Time Limit**

All graduate work toward a master's degree must be completed according to the Graduate School policy at Auburn University.

## **STUDENT REGISTRATION PROCESS**

Each student is responsible for knowing the registration process and for registering for courses each semester. Registration will be done on the Auburn campus. Students are sent information about registration and email from the Auburn University Graduate College upon acceptance into the MSN program. Questions about this process should be directed to the Graduate School at 334-844-4700.

Students complete two courses at Troy University. The Troy University transient admission form and admission fee must be paid. Upon completion of the form and payment of the admission fee the student must notify the MSN program director so that a letter of authorization may be sent. After the student is notified that the letter of authorization is sent the student is responsible for registering for the appropriate course.

### **Student Tuition and Fees**

Please go to the Graduate School Bulletin to see the most up-to-date information on tuition costs at <http://www.auburn.edu/bulletin/> under the heading of "Financial Information." Nonresident fees do not apply to out-of-state students receiving a one-fourth- time or greater appointment as a graduate teaching assistant, research assistant, or extension assistant.

Students will need to check with Troy University-Montgomery for current information on fees for courses offered by Troy University.

In addition students are responsible for costs associated with student-related projects (including, but not limited to, poster presentations, brochures and handouts) in individual courses.

### **Student ID Cards and Name pins**

Auburn University Student IDs can be obtained in the Student Union. These Student IDs are required for all students during practicum experiences. Students may contact Auburn University on procedures for obtaining the appropriate student ID.

## COMMUNICATION POLICIES

### Email

**Email (Tigermail) is the official means of communication** for graduate students. Course email use will be detailed in specific courses. First-time users can get their login name and password once they are registered for courses by following the protocol at [http://www.auburn.edu/oit/support/students/accounts/ht\\_getting\\_aun.php](http://www.auburn.edu/oit/support/students/accounts/ht_getting_aun.php). Once you have your name and password, you can access directly at <http://tigermail.auburn.edu> or via the Auburn student website (<http://www.auburn.edu/main/currentstudents.html>).

Questions about the information technology and Tigermail at Auburn can be answered by calling the OIT Help Desk at (334) 844-9400, or viewing the online "Help for Students" page at <http://www.auburn.edu/oit/support/students/index.php>. To access the full features of wireless internet at Auburn, you will need to download and install the Cisco VPN from the AU Install Page. Users of Windows and Linux, use the main AU Install page, while Mac users should use the page at [http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science\\_math/apple](http://www.auburn.edu/academic/science_math/apple).

### Confidentiality of Classroom & Electronic Communications

Information that is discussed in the classroom or on web-based assignments should be viewed as confidential and not shared with anyone not enrolled in the class. Clinical assignment information is considered confidential. Students will abide by HIPAA guidelines.

### Lines of Authority in Communication

Lines of authority and communication are depicted in the Schools of Nursing organizational chart.

If an academic question or problem arises, the student should pursue the matter in the following sequence:

1. Course faculty
2. The student's faculty advisor
3. The PCNP students should next turn to the coordinator of the PCNP formal option
4. Director of the Nursing Graduate Program
5. Dean of the Schools of Nursing
6. Dean of the Graduate School

If a non-academic question or problem arises, the student should pursue the matter in the following sequence:

- a. The student's faculty advisor
- b. Director of the Nursing Graduate Program

## **COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

Classes offered in the MSN program will require use of computer and web technology. Keyboard skills, knowledge in the use of Windows, MS Office, and word processing are required. Some courses will be completely on-line while other courses will utilize a combination of face-to-face interaction and on-line learning. Various strategies will be employed in the on-line portion of courses that include but are not limited to email, assignment submissions, bulletin board discussions, chat rooms, and threaded discussions.

Students must be able to download and print documents in Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat formats from the web. They must also be able to construct documents in several formats, including Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Excel, and Microsoft FrontPage.

The Schools of Nursing provides computer labs on both the Auburn and Montgomery campuses. However, students often like to use their own computers when possible. It is suggested that students should check with the AU School of Nursing instructional technology person before purchasing any equipment.

### **Hardware**

- PC or Mac
- Windows XP or higher
- Mac OS 9 or higher
- Internet access-high speed cable or DSL connection works best in the online learning environment
- Printer
- Headset with a microphone

### **Software**

- Blackboard-access is provided when you register for your classes
- Firefox is the recommended browser for Blackboard. You can download Firefox for free at Mozilla: <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>
- Java-Java is a free download
- Adobe Flash Player-the player is a free download
- Adobe PDF Reader-the reader is a free download
- Microsoft Office Home and Student Edition- you will use Word, PowerPoint and Excel at a minimum. You are advised to get the most current edition of Microsoft Office

### **Internet Settings**

- Pop-up Blockers must be **OFF**
- Cookies must be enabled
- 

### **Equipment and Learning Materials**

Equipment and learning materials are loaned to students for use in meeting curriculum objectives. The student who checks out equipment and learning materials is responsible for their timely return. In the event of loss or damage, charges to the student for costs of repair and/or replacement of equipment and learning materials will be forwarded to the Bursar's Office of Auburn University. Holds will be placed on the student's enrollment, transcript, and/or diploma until restitution for damaged or lost equipment and learning materials is made.

## **MSN GENERAL POLICIES**

### **Admission**

Upon admission to the MSN Program specific information will be needed. An informational packet and forms will be sent to each student upon admission. Students must return the required information before the first day of class or they may be administratively withdrawn from courses.

### **Professional Liability and Malpractice Insurance**

All students in the Graduate Program must be covered by malpractice and comprehensive general liability insurance. Proof of current insurance must be filed in your student record. Students are also charged a fee by the SON for liability policy for the School.

### **Background Checks**

Some clinical agencies may require criminal background checks. If a student desires an experience in such an agency the student is responsible for obtaining the background check and the subsequent cost of the background check.

### **Substance Use/Abuse Policy**

This policy pertains to all graduate students in the AU/AUM MSN Program. The policy of the Schools of Nursing is consistent with university policies related to alcohol or substance use or abuse.

These Policies are:

- Chemical Substance Testing (testing required by clinical agencies). Consistent with agency contracts, all MSN students will be required to submit to and pass drug testing prior to participation in clinical practica.

- Reasonable Suspicion Testing. Any student covered under this policy will be subject to mandatory testing for the presence of illegal or legally controlled substances and/or alcohol if and when there is reason to conclude that the student is impaired as a result of chemical substance abuse, or that he or she may be abusing chemical substances, even if not obviously impaired.
- Refusal of the student to submit to testing in these circumstances will be grounds for immediate removal from practicum courses, and possible dismissal from the Schools of Nursing. The cost of chemical substance testing undertaken as a result of reasonable suspicion of substance abuse and or impairment will be borne by the Schools of Nursing.
- Further Actions and Consequences. Upon confirmation of chemical substance use, students will be removed immediately from practicum courses by the Director of the Graduate Program. They will then be referred to Auburn University's Counseling and Psychological Services for evaluation and counseling.
- The cost of chemical substance testing performed as part of a treatment program, including maintenance monitoring, will be considered to be part of the cost of the program to be paid by the student, and not by the School of Nursing.
- After completion of the evaluation and counseling process, the student may apply to the Graduate Admission Committee for reinstatement in a practicum course upon a showing of facts which support the conclusion that the student is no longer at risk of chemical substance abuse.

### **Blood and Body Fluids Exposure Procedure**

Each student and clinical faculty member should be aware of the policies for Blood and Body Fluid Exposure Procedure. This policy is available upon requests at the Schools of Nursing.

### **Clinical Competency Policy**

Students may be required to complete a basic assessment and clinical skills examination in the first clinical course and in any other course if the faculty needs confirmation of the student's clinical competency. Any student who has not taken another clinical course for 12 months after completing NURS 7110 may be asked to demonstrate clinical competency by completing a basic assessment and clinical skills examination.

## **CLASSROOM AND EVALUATION POLICYS**

### **Attendance**

Absences may seriously affect a student's success in a course. Absence is not only physical absence from a course but absence from participating in online courses or online

portions of courses. Clinical absences must be made up if the reason for the absence is acceptable. This make up time will be negotiated between the course faculty, preceptor and agency. Unacceptable excuses for any course activities may result in failure of the course.

Attendance and participation in class are expected with online and face-to-face course meetings. Anticipated absences from University for professional functions are to be discussed with the course faculty in advance and they may or may not approve the absence. If students miss course material, it is their responsibility to acquire the missing content.

Tardiness in any type of course interaction is rude and disruptive to the course. Excessive tardiness may result in failing the course. Students will be counseled on an individual basis for tardiness as needed.

### **Student Papers**

Student papers must be prepared in accordance with the most current version of American Psychological Association (APA). Exceptions to the APA format may be found in individual courses. **All formal papers must be completed in accordance with the Guide to Writing Scholarly Papers in the MSN Program, posted on the Auburn University School of Nursing website**

In most cases students will not be able to redo graded assignments. Exceptions to this may be made by individual faculty based on any special circumstances deemed as appropriate by the faculty.

### **Late Papers**

Students are expected to complete and submit classroom, laboratory, and practicum assignments on time. Students submitting late work, unless previous arrangements have been made with course coordinator, may be penalized either by receiving a lower grade or no credit for the assignment. Consequences for late work will be detailed in each course's syllabus.

### **Evaluation of Courses and Teaching**

Upon completion of each course, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course and faculty. Provision will be made for anonymity of responses.

Faculty use this information for formative and summative evaluation and modification of the course and the learning strategies. A representative sample of student evaluations is also used by faculty in their own self-evaluation and in preparing dossiers for promotion and tenure.

Courses are also reviewed by the Schools of Nursing Curriculum Committee and changes are monitored by the Graduate and University Curriculum Committees.

General input is also solicited by the SON Evaluation Committee on curriculum from alumnae and their employers. Faculty also seek input from peers, supervisors, and other qualified to judge their expertise and teaching in their individual evaluations.

### **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

A comprehensive examination program examination is not required by the AU/AUM Joint MSN Program.

### **EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE COURSE SERIES**

Beginning in the summer of 2011 NURS 7360, 7370, and 7940 are three courses in the curriculum that build competency in the area of understanding, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based practice.

In the third course in the EBP series students will complete a project that demonstrates an understanding of the EBP process. The nature and scope of the project will be decided between the student and the faculty of record and faculty team in N 7940. Student's work is subject to the university's policy on Human Subjects Approval.

### **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Each graduate student's progress toward degree completion is monitored by the student's major academic advisor and the Director of the MSN Program. Issues of professional and personal development may be considered.

While failure to maintain academic standards merits automatic dismissal, a student also may be dropped from the MSN Program if progress is unsatisfactory in other areas, e.g. clinical competency issues. In such cases, the advisor and Director of the MSN Program will prepare a statement of deficiencies and/or grievances and discuss it in a meeting with the student.

The student will be notified in writing of corrective measures that must be taken or standards that must be met within a specified time to avoid action that might result in dismissal. The major academic advisor and the program director will determine the period of time allowed for correction in accordance with Graduate School policies. Copies of the statement of action needed and a summary of the meeting will be provided to the student, the MSN Program Director, the Dean of the Schools of Nursing and the graduate dean within one week of the meeting.

If the deficiency is not corrected within the time allowed in the statement, a statement reiterating the grievance and recommending dismissal should be sent to the Director of the MSN Program.

The MSN Program Director after review will forward this recommendation with his/her recommendation to the Dean of the Schools of Nursing. The Dean of the Schools of



Nursing will evaluate the recommendations and forward them with his/her recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate College.

The graduate dean will give the student an opportunity to respond and will make a final determination. The student and the advisory committee will be notified.

The action taken will not appear on the student's official transcript, and release of information is restricted under the University's policy on the confidentiality of student records.

## **Grades**

The grades A, B, C, D and F are used in computing grade point averages. A, B, C and S are the only passing or satisfactory grades. Grades of D or F are failing. Students who receive a D or F grade in a required course must register for the required course the next time it is given. A course may be re-taken only once and if a passing grade is not received in the second attempt students will be considered not progressing in the program and will be dismissed. Grades are calculated as follows: A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = below 60.

Since all courses may not be offered each semester, course failure could result in not finishing the program when planned or graduation may be affected by the student's time clock in the program.

The grade of S (satisfactory) is a neutral passing grade. The grade of U (unsatisfactory) is used to indicate that no credit will be given for the course.

The grade of I (incomplete) is a neutral grade. It is not an alternative to a grade of F, but is intended as a temporary grade to be used when a student who, for reasons satisfactory to the faculty and MSN Program Director, is unable to complete certain identifiable requirements of a course and who cannot be assigned any other grade.

The I grade is typically used in situations in which illness or other extenuating circumstances prevent the student from completing course requirements. A grade of I in a course which is a prerequisite for other courses will prevent the student from enrolling in those courses.

A grade of I must be removed within the period prescribed by the Auburn Graduate School. This applies regardless of the student's enrollment status. A student not enrolled during the following six months is not exempt from this rule. A student may not graduate until "incomplete" and "no record" grades are removed, and the removal must be completed at least three weeks before the date of graduation, regardless of whether the course is included on the Plan of Study.

A written warning is issued by the appropriate faculty at mid-semester to any student failing a course. The warning includes specification of unacceptable performance and actions the student must take in order to pass the course.

The grade of AW may be assigned to indicate that a student has been "involuntarily" withdrawn by the institution during the designated semester for disciplinary or financial reasons or inadequate attendance.

Examples of instances in which the grade of AW may be recorded are:

- Disciplinary - Violation of alcohol and drug abuse and racial or ethnic harassment policies.
- Financial - Failure to pay fees/tuition before the last day of a current term. A student may be reinstated for a term by paying all fees, tuition, and penalties owed, if paid within one year of the last day the term for which charges remain outstanding. Upon reinstatement within one year, grades originally assigned will be included on the student's transcript.
- Attendance - Absences seriously affecting a student's class are reported by faculty to the Director of the Graduate Program and an administrative withdrawal from the course may be initiated after consultation with the student and the School of Nursing Dean.

### **Degree Requirements**

To receive a graduate degree from the Joint MSN Program a student must maintain cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on all courses carrying graduate credit. No more than nine hours beyond the student's Plan of Study is allowed in obtaining the cumulative graduate GPA (CGGPA).

No grade below C (including unsatisfactory grades for courses taken under the S/U option) is acceptable for credit toward a graduate degree. Each graduate course in which a grade lower than a C is received must be repeated whether or not it is listed on the student's Plan of Study. Both the original grade and the grade for the repeated course will be counted in calculating the CGGPA. Course credits transferred from another institution may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Courses retaken will not count against the nine-hour limit beyond the student's Plan of Study in obtaining the minimum CGGPA.

**Beginning with students admitted in the summer of 2011 and thereafter students must receive a grade of B in all required courses in the formal program option. A course receiving less than a grade of B may be retaken only one time.**

The student must successful any other course specific requirements, examinations, and papers.

### **Academic Probation**

Only grades in courses approved for graduate credit and the student's plan of study will be used in determining the overall GPA for continuation in the Graduate School.

If at the end of any semester the student has not received a B in a course they will be placed on probation and must repeat the course with a grade of B before they can continue in the program unless there is a course that can be taken (check the sequencing policy) out of sequence the next semester.

Please see the Graduate School's Policy on remediation for students who fail to come off the probationary status.

### **Policy on Course Sequencing**

- All core courses need to be completed before entering the PCNP specialty courses. Exception is NURS 7250 Healthcare Policy and Ethics for the Nurse Leader which may be taken at anytime during the program.
- NURS 7320 Curriculum Development and Evaluation and the EDLD 8500 The Professoriate need to be completed before taking NURS 7810 Education Practicum.
- In the case of part-time education option students' core courses needs to be done before the pathway specific courses. Exception is NURS 7250 Healthcare Policy and Ethics for the Nurse Leader which may be taken at anytime during the program.
- EBP sequence-needs to be done early-EBP III could be early or during the final semester.

### **Policy on Practicum Experiences**

Students are encouraged to move outside their place of employment, other units might be appropriate, but it is imperative that students have experiences in which the role is clearly different. Students may make a proposal for to the director and course faculty if requesting to complete practicum where they work and each case will be considered on an "as needed basis" based on course objectives and student needs.

## **Important Dates for Graduation**

Specific deadlines are published by the graduate school for each semester. It is each student's responsibility to know these dates and submit the needed forms/paperwork on time. Late forms/paperwork may result in delayed graduation.

- All graduation check requests are due no later than the last day (graduation day) of the semester PRIOR to the semester of graduation.
- Use the PRELIMINARY LIST during the semester before the current term to determine who has submitted a graduation check request.
- Use the ALPHABETICAL LIST during the semester of graduation to see who remains on the graduation list.
- Do not expect an accurate ALPHABETICAL LIST until after the 15th class day of each term. The Graduate School cannot check the registration status of gradulators until after the 15th class day because departments can and do still register students until the 15th class day.
- Students will drop off the ALPHABETICAL LIST following the 15th class day as they fail to meet deadlines, fail to correct previously identified problems, or as the Graduate School is notified to remove them.
- All final projects or research work must meet deadlines published by the graduate college and the MSN program for an on-time graduation. Failure to meet the published deadlines may result in delayed graduation.

## **Graduation Requirements**

No student will be permitted to graduate who does not have an approved Plan of Study on file in the Graduate School or who fails to submit a graduation check request to the Graduate School prior to the semester of expected graduation.

Graduation day is the official last day of each semester and, therefore, is the deadline for approved plans of study and graduation checks for graduation the following semester.

It is the responsibility of graduate students to check records for compliance with graduation requirements. Students who have completed a Plan of Study and graduation check for a previous term must notify the Graduate School of pending graduation before the 15th class day of subsequent semesters. Graduate degrees are awarded at the end of each semester. Candidates wishing to graduate in absentia must inform the Office of Records and Admissions.

Students who have in a previous term completed all requirements for the degree, upon receipt of a "certificate of completion" form from the Graduate School, will not be required to register in a future term if their graduation is delayed or postponed.

Students are responsible for knowing and understanding all Graduate School Policies. Policies are always changing and students are advised to frequently check the Graduate School website for revisions of policies that might impact their success and graduation.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

All students in the graduate program are expected to comply with legislative standards in accordance with the State Laws Regulating Practice of Registered and Practical Nursing. Failure to comply with these standards may be cause for denial of license to practice as a registered nurse. **Failure to comply with state standards and laws while in the MSN program constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program.**

### **Patient Confidentiality**

Patient confidentiality at clinical facilities is expected for the successful completion of any nursing course. Students have read and signed the confidentiality agreement and they will be held accountable. Any breach of a patient's confidentiality by a student will result in disciplinary action against the student and may result in their dismissal from the graduate program.

### **Academic Honesty**

#### **The Joint MSN Program at Auburn University and Auburn University Schools of Nursing Oath:**

Whereas, the Schools of Nursing pride themselves as a top tier institute of higher education and acknowledges the need for integrity in such an environment, and

Whereas, in striving to maintain its due accreditation and success, the University's pledge to set the example within the Southeastern Conference and throughout the nation as a University grounded in the principles of duty and honor; and

Whereas, we as a University and Family are proudly bound to such authenticity set forth in the Creed by stating, "I believe in Honesty and Truthfulness, without which I cannot win the respect and confidence of my fellow men;" and

Whereas, an exciting honor code presides over each University student, yet lacks the visibility, respect and obligation carried by an Oath of Honor; and

Whereas, the Intent of such an Oath is simply to instill a code of conduct so rich in honor and integrity that one's walk with virtue not stall upon graduation, but rather propel him or her into society as an example of those principles the University men and women hold most dear; therefore, be it

Resolved, first, through the consent of the Student Senate, as a representative and protective body over the rights of each student, the following be adopted as the University Oath of Honor:

Resolved, second, that the presence of the Oath be made known to all students; and

Resolved, third, that each student sign the Oath upon presentation of the individual syllabus by each instructor at the beginning of the semester, and that the signing further be encouraged at the instructor's discretion on any other test, paper, or related assignment.

*“In Accordance with those virtues of Honesty and Truthfulness set forth in the Auburn Creed, I, as a student and fellow member of the Auburn family, do hereby pledge that all work is my own, achieved through personal merit and without any unauthorized aid. In the promotion of integrity, and for the betterment of Auburn, I give honor to this, my oath and obligation.”*

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*Signed*

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*Date*

Your signed oath must be turned in to the MSN Program Director no later than two weeks after beginning your first graduate course. **Enrollment in your first class constitutes your signed oath and your understanding of the Auburn Creed**

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes, but may not be limited to, (1) cheating, using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise or on national board examination, plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement; (2) assisting others in any such act; or (3) attempts to engage in such acts.

### **Plagiarism**

The AU/AUM MSN Program has adopted a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. Therefore, if an assignment is considered to be plagiarized, it will be brought to the student's advisory committee and MSN Program Director. The minimum penalty is a grade of zero (0). The student may also be subject to additional consequences based on the recommendations of the advisory committee and The MSN Program Director. A Critical Incident Report will be placed in the student's permanent file.

Plagiarism is defined as the practice of (dishonestly) claiming or implying original authorship of material which one has not actually created, such as when a person incorporates material from someone else's work into his own work without [attributing](#) it.

Within [academia](#), plagiarism is seen as [academic dishonesty](#) and is a serious and punishable academic offense. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>).

### **Academic Appeals**

See university policies on Academic Appeals.

## **STUDENT RESOURCES**

### **Computer Labs**

Both Schools of Nursing have state-of-the-art computer labs. The AU lab is located 226 Miller Hall. The AUM lab is located in the Nursing Resource Center on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

### **Libraries**

Students will be able to use libraries and library services on both the AU campus and the AUM campus. Access to the AUM library will occur after the first week of courses.

### **Photocopying**

Services are available on both campus or at many local copy stores.

### **Financial Aid**

A variety of scholarships and student loans are available to graduate nursing students. All applications for financial assistance must be made through the University Financial Aid Office located in 203 Mary Martin Hall. The priority deadline for applications for financial aid is April 15. Application forms are available there on February 1. Various Nursing Scholarships are available for students in the Professional Program and Graduate program. Application forms are available in the Office of the Academic Advisor on first floor. Students on provisional admission are not eligible for financial aid until they have full admission status.

Many hospitals offer scholarships/loans with the agreement of employment by the hospital for a specified length of time. Individual hospitals should be contacted for information.

Graduate students are also eligible for employment as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) if funds are available. GTAs are employed 10 - 20 hours per week to assist with teaching in the baccalaureate program. GRAs are employed 10 hours per week to assist faculty with research studies. Students interested in employment as GTAs or GRAs should contact the MSN Program Director.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Student Governance**

Students will be notified of opportunities to be a part of standing committees and graduate student activities via the tiger email system. Students may be asked by the MSN Program Director or by the graduate faculty to participate in various activities. Refusal to participate will not impact any course grades or any standing in the MSN program.

### **Sigma Theta Tau, Theta Delta (AU)/Kappa Omega (AUM) Chapters**

Sigma Theta Tau is the international honor society for nursing. The purposes of the organization are to support research, recognize leadership and scholarly achievement, and strengthen commitment to the ideals and purposes of the profession of nursing.

Graduate Students of the Joint AU/AUM MSN Program who are not already members will be notified of their eligibility when they completed at least 1/4 of the nursing curriculum, have a minimum 3.5 GPA and meet the expectation of academic integrity. Eligible MSN students may choose either chapter or hold dual membership in the chapters listed above.

### **Phi Kappa Phi**

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is the oldest and most selective academic honor society dedicated to the recognition and promotion of academic excellence in all fields of higher education. Membership is by invitation only and is offered to the top five percent of graduating students in each college and school.

### **Omicron Delta Kappa**

Graduate students nearing completion of their programs of study are eligible to be nominated to chapters of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), a national leadership honor society. Nominations are made by faculty members and students who agree to be nominated may be asked to provide biographical data.

### **Professional Organizations**

Many professional organization are available that may offer reduced membership rates for graduate students. Graduate students are encouraged to become an active member of organizations of their choice. Some organizations that students might consider are:

- American Nurses Association/Alabama State Nurses Association
- Chi Eta Phi Sorority
- National Association for Clinical Nurse Specialist
- National League For Nursing/ Alabama League For Nursing
- Southern Nursing Research Society
- Nurse Practitioner Professional Associations



## MISCELLENOUS INFORMATION

### **Name and Address Changes**

Students, whose name, address and/or phone number changes while enrolled in MSN Program, should notify their Academic Advisor, School of Nursing Student Services Office, Graduate School, and the Registrar's Office.

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

The MSN Program endorses the AU and AUM policies regarding students with disabilities. The MSN program provides accessible programs, services and activities and reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Faculty work to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to pursue an education.

Nursing is a practice discipline with cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor performance requirements. Qualified individuals are those who satisfy admission requirements and who can perform essential functions of a nursing program with or without reasonable accommodation or modification. Definitions of essential functions will be provided upon request to the MSN Program Director.

To be eligible for program accommodation, students must present disability documentation to the Director of the Program for Students with Disabilities, who will forward eligibility status to the MSN Program Director. It is the student's responsibility to initiate any requests for accommodation. If essential nursing functions cannot be performed after appropriate accommodations are done; the faculty, in consultation with the MSN Program Director, RESERVES the right to withdraw the student from clinical courses.

This policy is adopted from the Southern Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing (SCCEN) and the University Program for Students with Disabilities. It is congruent with the skills presented in the document entitled Essentials of College and University Education for Professional Nursing.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Services may be available at either campus. Students needing these services should seek guidance in finding the appropriate resources from the academic advisor or the MSN Program Director. All such request will be confidential.

## **Writing Help**

Online writing and other academic helps may be found at:

<http://www.cla.auburn.edu/clastudents/academicassistance>

Writing help is also available on both campuses via writing centers and student services.